Sam Parks "Up Against It"

His Rise in Organized Blackmail and His Downfall.

Abuse has been hurled by the bucketful at Sam Parks in these last five months. Cheap pathos has been sprinkled upon his quite unlovely career in no small quantities. Cheap as the pathos has been, it has not been so cheap as the abuse.

Sam Parks has taken both with a thoroughly creditable indifference. If he is a desolate and discouraged man to-day, it is not because people call him names; it is not because his hard heart has been softened by the sympathy of those whose voices have trembled in telling the story of his misfortunes. Sam Parks is downhearted because he is "up against It."

When Sam Parks says he is "up against It," he means that he is "up against" fate.

As individuals go, Sam Parks has been a big man. In the human species of mammals, he has stood out large against the crowd.

He is not a student of economics or of psychology; his only study all his life long has been to make the most, the selfish, brutal most, of Sam Parks. He did not know that in following the course he marked out for himself he had become a part of a machine far more selfish and brutal and powerful than any one man had ever become—that he was a mere cog in the mill of organized blackmail.

He was, all unknowing, an important cog, a well cut cog, a cog that did more of the machine's work without showing the strain than any other cog would have been expected to do. Cogs break. When they break, the machine does not necessarily stop, or at any rate stop for long. The broken cog is charged to repairs; it is replaced or eliminated from the system, and the machine goes on.

Sam Parks, who thought that he was the whole machine, finds himself to-day on the scrap heap. He hears the machine rumbling on without him.

He sees a curious crowd looking him over and wondering how he ever could have been as important as he was. Now and then he fancies he hears the masters of the machine holding whispered consultations about him.

"Is it worth while," he fancies he hears them saying, "to get him out and try to use him again? Could he be worth while if he were saved from the scrap heap?"

Sam Parks thought he was the whole machine. He was not; he knows that now. He knows that he will never be any part of anything big again. He is among the discards. He is, as he stoically acknowledges, "up against It."

A little man would fill the air with whines and protestations of his undaunted spirit. Sam Parks does not.

He made himself what he has been by using the men of the Housesmiths and Bridgemen's Union, even as the pirate kings of romance used their crews, by sharing with them a small part of the loot, by spectacular and cruel use of brute force. Just as Samson, in his day of degradation—when he knew himself "up against It" pulled down the Temple of Dagon, Sam Parks has determined to make his end as spectacular as he believed his days of might and authority had been.

With obscenity and blasphemy that may not be reproduced in print, he has uttered, not once, but often, during the last week or two, this threat:

"I'll make a holy show of 'em. I'll have my fun with 'em. The bastards! I made 'em! And, God have mercy on their dirty yellow souls, I'll break 'em!"

He fashioned himself, with all his crude power and wicked glory, out of these men. Now his power and his glory are gone.

It cannot be his fault, he thinks; he cannot believe that it is his fault. It must be the fault of the men he used. They shall go down with him. The fall of Sam Parks shall be made greater by the fall of all who have ever depended on him and helped him.

So, though Sam Parks knows that he is "up against It," he still cherishes the delusion that he can put other men "up against It," too.

There is something about the barbaric self-confidence of Parks that reminds one of the pagan emperors who decreed themselves to be gods.

Study his face as the artist has seen it It is a gaunt face. It is the face of a man who has been pulled down and racked by a terrible disease—a disease brought on by the belief of Sam Parks that he was strong enough to ignore the penalties which inexorable nature has established for those who live evil and reckless lives.

He has been called by some of his unsought sympathizers a consumptive. A commission of eminent experts examined him when he was taken to Sing Sing a few weeks ago and they found that there was no consumption in him. But he is not likely to live long; he knows it.

As he has been brought into the Court of General Sessions every day this week for his trial for extorting money from the Tiffany Studios, he has resembled nothing so much as a wild animal at bay. Parks does not look like a brave man. His face has cunning in it, and savagery; it is the face of a human rat.

A rat in a corner, facing a dog which is inclined to be cruelly playful before the kill, will keep up a look of indifference that is illuminated once in a while by a showing of the teeth, by a quick, alert glance for the best possible attempt at a last struggle. Parks, sitting at his counsel's side in the court room, is not pleasant to look at.

On Labor Day, when he rode down Fifth avenue on his white horse at the head of 18,000 workingmen, he was described as "a little man, hunched up on his horse like a monkey riding a circus pony."

On a horse he did seem small. Perhaps the horse, a fine-spirited brute, full of playful pride, may have created the illusion by contrast. But certainly the curious thousands who turned out of their way to see him ride by could not believe that this yellow, bunched-up creature could be the hero of a thousand rough and tumble fights, the terror of his enemies.

But in the court room one sees him as he is, in all his 6 feet of unloveliness. Scrawny, homely of face and figure as sin itself, it is easy to see how, with his inordinate opinion of his own authority, he compelled other men to do as he ordered.

He has changed very much since Labor Day. Then he was full of the self-demonstrated truth that he was greater than the law of the land.

Had not the District Attorney exploited him as one who was to be made a dreadful example to the unjust kings of labor? Had not the world been promised that "Sam Parks should be put where the dogs would not bite him"? Had he not even suffered the putting on of the convict uniform and the shaving of his head and the imposition of manual labor?

And had he not proved that his authority could bring forth money enough to hire lawyers sharp enough to find a Judge who would let him out to lead his own down Fifth avenue? Those whom he had called by names vile and contemptuous marched behind him cheering his name. They had contributed the money which got him out. Out of his own private hoard it had not been necessary for him to spend a cent.

He was an institution. Why should he care whether men hooted or cheered? He smiled at them all benignantly and acknowledged their notice by a low bow, an ironical smile and a wave of his riding-whip. Sam Parks was having fun with his world.

But the delusion that he retains some of his powers still clings. He sits in the court room going through the form of making his final fight; he knows well that there is no more fight, but he makes the end as slow as it may be. All the while he meditates the horrible things which he believes he will do to those he holds responsible for his downfall—for the simple and Parks-like reason that they were the means of his rise.

It is worth while to consider the life of this man who came to believe that he owned and controlled a great body of his fellow men; that he was above the law, and that he was great enough to exact tribute, right and left, wherever he saw an opportunity for exaction. It is hard for normal human minds to understand how thorough his success, through the support and stimulation of a great blackmail machine, had inspired him with the idea that, in the labor world, at least, he was omnipotent.

The truth of the beginning of his assault on the revenue of the Tiffany Studios has never before been told. It will not be told in court. It is told here as it came from the mouth of a friend of Parks, who was with him on the day that he marked the Tiffany establishment down to be his prey.

They two, Sam Parks and Sam Parks's friend, were walking down an avenue together. They passed a building where the Tiffany's were executing a contract.

"Who's doing the work there?" asked the friend, just by way of making conversation and of giving Parks a chance to show his

SAM PARKS, WHO IS "UP AGAINST IT."

thorough acquaintance with his own business.

"Where?" asked Sam Parks, carelessly. Then, as he observed the building, he became suddenly interested. "Well, by God!" he exclaimed, with other oaths less printable. "Now, that's a new one on me! I never knew about this business before in my life. Say, ain't they got a nerve? Never said a word to me! Wait a minute!"

He went into the building, and pretty soon came out again, the workmen trooping behind.

"I pulled them out," he explained to his friend. "Hell of a nerve, some of these people have! Think they can put men to work without seeing Sam Parks!"

"What did the bosses say?" asked the friend.

"I didn't see any bosses," remarked Sam Parks, with a sardonic grin. "Let them come to see me. It'll do 'em good. Next time they start work on a new job they'll come see Sam Parks first!"

The rest of the story every newspaper reader knows. How the Tiffanys asked their men what the matter was and how the men said that there was nothing the matter but Sam Parks. How they were asked what complaints must be settled before work could go on, and how they said: "See Sam Parks!"

How the Tiffanys saw Sam Parks and paid him $500 as an initiation fee and received permission to do business in New York and its vicinity, with or without union men, so long as they kept on respecting the Parks system of lawless law—all that has come out in testimony at the trial.

The experience of many other gangs of men on many similar occasions has been that if they did not stop work when Sam Parks ordered them to, if they ventured to go into union meetings and protest against the orders of Parks, they would be met by his famous "entertainment committee."

The function of the "entertainment committee" was to impress upon the members of Sam Parks's union desirability of observing literally the decrees of Sam Parks. Iron workers are not tender and soft-spoken folk. They are men of cold nerve and strong muscles.

Their work is the fitting of steel beams and the riveting of them with red hot rivets, on airy perches, hundreds of feet from the street. The terrorizing of such men as these is not a task for children.

The "entertainment committee" was never made up of children. It was made up of just such men as surrounded those same pirate kings of romance. On the Bowery they speak of such as "men who are too strong to work."

The story of the work of this committee has been printed piecemeal in the newspapers for years. We do not notice these things until, long after they have happened, we begin to understand what the happening of them meant.

For instance, who, except those immediately interested, remembers the visit of the "entertainment committee" to the Ansonia apartment house, on upper Broadway, at the time of the difference of opinion between Parks and the firm which was installing manganese steel safes in the safe deposit vaults in the bank in the big hotel? These manganese steel safes were of such a character that they could be installed only by men versed in the handling of that particular sort of steel. These men were machinists, union men, from the safe manufacturers' works in New Jersey.

Parks's jackal, McCarthy, found them at work. He demanded tribute from the manufacturers. Before they put in any more work on those steel safes they must "see McCarthy."

They recklessly told McCarthy that they would not "see" him. Within twenty-four hours their men were beaten with iron bars and pelted with brickbats and they abandoned their jobs in fear of their lives.

Then the bank folks persuaded the safe folks to come to terms; to hire iron workers and bridgemen who knew nothing about manganese steel to stand around and smoke cigars at six and seven dollars a day, while the New Jersey men did the real work.

Both Parks and McCarthy were far from satisfied with this solution. They promised that no work should be done by this company in New York until the company had "seen them."

The company is still doing business. The "entertainment committee" has not since figured in the police bulletins of assaults as having attacked manganese steel workers. But nobody who knows Parks and his underlings has any doubt that the company looked over the ground and decided that it was cheaper to "see" Parks and his lieutenants than to give the "entertainment committee" an excuse for visiting its employees.

That is but one instance out of a thousand. The union, at Parks's demand, never failed to make liberal appropriation for the "entertainment committee." Hence the committee. It was "too strong to work."

Much of the reputation of Parks for physical prowess is doubtless due to this committee. There are instances without number of attempts by Parks to bulldoze men who were of smaller size than himself, which passed for the time in peppery defiance of the big man by the small man; but the end was the cruel bruising and mauling of the little man by the "entertainment committee" on the most convenient dark corner.

More than once the lanky Parks has been fairly and squarely licked by those with whom he has picked quarrels. The victors have had cause to sorely regret their victories.

Parks, of course, could not have continued to do these wicked things had he been simply Sam Parks, setting up an oligarchy in a civilized community. At any time the building contractors of the city could have crushed him by uniting in self-defence. An article in *McClure's Magazine* for November by Ray Stannard Baker explains, by intimation, if not by direct statement, why there was no such uniting of employers to destroy Parks.

Did an employer on a large job desire more men than were available, he would pay Parks to order a strike on some smaller employer's job, in order that competent laborers might be set at liberty. Parks, incidentally, could receive pay, and did, for restoring to the small employer the right to employ free and independent American citizens, housesmiths and bridgemen, to complete the small contract.

Did a certain employer of housesmiths desire to underbid another on a certain job, he made his contract with Parks in advance. He knew, before making his bid, how much it would cost him to "see Parks." His competitor didn't know how much it would cost to "see Parks" and had to bid in the dark—necessarily to a disadvantage. The writer knows of one instance in which a contractor went to a large corporation with a bid on certain ironwork to be done on the other side of the North River. He said:

"I will do that job for so much on its merits. But I will have to pay Sam Parks $500 and that will be extra, unless you can guarantee me protection against him."

Only the fact that the general strikes were declared soon afterward in the building trades headed off a most interesting campaign between the New Jersey corporation on the one hand and Sam Parks and his committee on the other.

The work was to be done on a steamship pier. The corporation planned to take the men to and from the pier on tugs and to put up permanent partitions between the ends of the piers and the mainland. The "entertainment committee" would therefore have been forced to become a naval force, and the battles would have been instructively dramatic.

But this is aside from the disadvantage imposed upon the contractor who was not with Parks, as compared with the contractor who was with him. The Fuller Construction Company, for instance, which was later merged with the United States Realty and Construction Company, came to this city from Chicago to begin operations at just about the same time that Sam Parks, who was then a non-union man, a "scab," came to New York.

Parks had been a foreman riveter and an able fighter against unionism for the Fuller Construction Company in the West. He had proved his ability and his power to lead men and compel their obedience.

Perhaps because of the sympathy which strangers in a strange land traditionally have for one another, Sam Parks has had very little quarrel with the Fuller company, in its original or its enlarged form. That he was on the Fuller company's payroll for a long time may have had something to do with the matter, in addition to the mere sentimental motive of sympathy.

But it is worth while to think over the advantage which any company to which Sam Parks, for reasons material or sentimental, felt friendly had over a company for which he had no kindly emotions. A young man came here recently from another city to go into the building and contracting business. Sam Parks was not so slow as he had been in the Tiffany case. He went to call upon the young man before a single contract had been bid upon.

"Before you begin business in this city," said he to the young man, "$1,500 to Parks. To me, Sam Parks."

The young man did not go into business at all. The tax was too heavy. The business he might have done, the effect his competition might have had upon the trade—these were eliminated from the calculations of companies which by virtue of long standing friendship and understandings and large capital were able to deal with Sam Parks more economically.

Mr. Baker, in the *McClure's* article, deals with these matters with philosophy and calm. He explains how Sam Parks was merely a cog in the wheel of the Big Grafting Machine, a machine without formal organization, perhaps—but only perhaps—made up of the corporate utilizers of such comparatively small individual grafters as Parks.

He makes it clear that certain useful results may be obtained by sending Sam Parks to Sing Sing; because McCarthy and the other deputy of Sam Parks will be frightened a little. But until the Fear of the Law is put into the hearts of those who make up the Big Machine—the spirit of graft capitalized—Sam Parks's soul will go marching on.

It will be some time before the Big Machine finds as handy a cog, and as strongly fashioned, lying ready to its hand as it found in Sam Parks. His history is a record of his survival of the process of elimination.

He started in this country as a raw Irish boy, full of the magnetism and the daring of the typical Irish lad of quick wit and big physique. He was born in County Down. He came over to Canada when he was 14.

He found work as a logger in the Northwest woods. It was no place for a weak man. One who was afraid of a cuff or was tender of feelings would not have lasted there.

Sam Park—his name was "Park" then and not "Parks"—came to have a man's place among men, though he was but a stripling. He shifted to railroading and was a brakeman. He became a Lake sailor. None of these is a light and trivial pursuit.

From one rough trade he drifted to another. He was a coal shoveller, he joined a gang of gravel diggers and showed them how to persuade their employers to raise their wages. In those days it has been said of him, by himself, that he would "rather fight than eat." It is said now, by men who are safe out of his reach and out of the reach of his "entertainment committee," that he would rather have fought a man smaller than himself than eat, and that he would find a way to get the man who was bigger than himself or braver done up by somebody else.

It was the same story, old now, new then. What Parks could not accomplish by his own hands or his own money, he found an organization or a corporation to do for him.

He worked his way from St. Paul to Puget Sound and back again. He became a section hand and foreman on the Canadian Pacific construction work.

He was one of the first men to learn the steel bridge building trade. As that trade developed into the building of frames for the modern skyscrapers, Sam Parks the laborer became Sam Parks the boss.

There was trouble in Chicago among the bridge builders and housesmiths. Sam Parks went to Chicago and became the centre of that trouble as the leader of the non-union forces.

At that time no corporation had fully learned the uses of the union walking delegate. One of them found out the quality of Sam Parks. He proved his ability. He was transferred to the other side of the battle and to New York. He blazed the way.

Sam Parks is "up against it." But it will be comparatively easy for smaller men, one at a time or in groups, to follow the path he had outlined, provided the Big Machine can provide lubricants, in the way of lawyers and other desirable commodities, to enable them to withstand the strain of the constant friction of the law as administered by an honest District Attorney.

It is just possible that there will not always be an honest District Attorney. Can the machine be dismantled before a dishonest District Attorney is elected to prevent its dismantling?

WHY HE URGED EUTHANASIA.

THE REV. MERLE ST. C. WRIGHT DEFENDS HIS THEORY.

Reasons for Giving a Painless Death in Cases of Hopeless, Agonized Suffering —Many Medical Men Agree With Him, He Says—Interest in His Recent Address

When the Rev. Merle St. C. Wright of the Lenox Avenue Unitarian Church, in a speech at a recent banquet of the New York State Medical Association, advanced the proposition that it would be to the advantage of society as well as of the sufferers themselves, if all persons afflicted with diseases or injuries from which there was no hope of recovery, were put painlessly to death, the suggestion proved rather startling, even to some of the scientific men present, to say nothing of laymen, who take conventional views of things.

The publication abroad of Mr. Wright's address stirred up very general comment. That such a theory should emanate from a clergyman came to many people in the nature of a shock.

Mr. Wright, at his home in Harlem yesterday, spoke freely, not only on the subject of his address before the State Medical Association, but on the criticisms that address had evoked as well.

"As to the criticisms in the newspapers," he said, "I have read but few of them. I saw at the outset that I had been misunderstood to a certain extent, that the writers were arguing from unwarranted premises to equally unwarranted conclusions. So I ceased to bother about reading what was printed.

"Only the other evening a friend at a club handed me an envelope full of clippings, saying that they might interest me. They did not and I have not read them.

"When I was invited to speak before the medical association I was told that the doctors expected to hear from those only who had something to say. I had thought a good deal on this topic and it seemed to me I had something to say on it. So I said it.

"I believed what I said to be true and I still believe it to be true. I believe eventually the time will come when enthanasia will be applied with public approval in certain cases.

"We may be far from that time now. It may be too early to discuss the subject outside of certain circles broad enough to eliminate superstition and apply the principles of cold logic to existing facts. Yet I do not clearly see why such matters should not be openly discussed—discussed, I mean, without rashness or in a manner calculated merely to shock people's preconceived opinions.

"There are some curious anomalies in regard to this matter of public discussion. Take the matter of stirpiculture as applied to the breeding of men, a subject to which I have given some study and thought—that and very delicate collateral topics are openly discussed not only in scientific, but in popular publications. Yet they are in a measure barred from oral debate.

"In saying what I did before the State Medical Association I was careful to entrench myself within a number of outlying propositions which have not always been respected in discussing what I had to say. In the first place I advanced the theory of eutaanasia as in the nature of a millennial dream not to be realized in our time, perhaps never to be realized.

"Then, again, what I proposed was that only such persons should be aided out of the world whose recovery was absolutely hopeless. If there were a grain of doubt on this point, then this doubt should go to the side of prolongation of their lives.

"Further than that I proposed that only those should be removed whose existence meant a mere prolongation for a greater or less time of agonized suffering. Still another condition I insisted upon before enthanasia were applied was that the sufferer should not only be willing to be removed painlessly but that he should request that this be done. Then I suggested that the consent of the sufferer's relatives be obtained.

"Now, to say that there is not a group of persons in this world so hopelessly afflicted that their recovery is impossible, so afflicted that their life is only a prolonged agony, so afflicted that their lingering on means not only misery to themselves, but the breaking down of the health, to say nothing of the money drain, of their relatives—to say there is not such a group as this is nonsense. There are such cases.

"They are clearly defined. They have come under the observation of everybody who has lived long in the world.

"I have been a clergyman here in New York for sixteen years and I recall case after case of this kind. There was an instance near here in Harlem only a short time ago where a man lay suffering miserably all through a long hot summer with no earthly hope of recovery, his lungs all gone and his life hanging momentarily by the merest thread.

"Such cases are common. They are distinctly defined as against those in which there is a hope, however small, of recovery. To such cases I would apply painless termination of the agony.

"I said before the Medical Association that I would first have the patient request that he be removed, and then the consent of the relatives should be obtained. Now, I do not know that this consent of the relatives would, in all cases, be necessary. I do not know that I would shackle the application of a principle which I am convinced would be of so much benefit by such a condition.

"Instances are constantly occurring where sufferers take the matter into their own hands. Men with perfectly clear heads after sitting in cool, dispassionate judgment on their own condition and on the prospects as to recovery have reached the same conclusion that there is nothing ahead in this world for them save prolonged suffering for themselves and incidental distress for their friends and relatives, and, so reasoning, have taken their own lives.

"Is suicide justifiable under certain conditions? Most assuredly it is. Of course, if you believe there is a special mandate from heaven against it, then that is another matter.

"So far as I am concerned, I have no such mandate and recognize none. I am here in this world and my lines run through both worlds.

"Eliminate superstition and conventional notions and cold logic tells you that that which will diminish the sum total of unnecessary suffering is of benefit to society. I took that position when I advocated euthanasia in hopeless cases of agonized existence. I still hold to that position and I think I could successfully meet a cross-examination on the tenability of my ground.

"I have good reason to believe that my opinion in this respect is shared by many medical men—not only shared but actually applied in many instances. I have heard of some things being done along that line.

"It is a very fascinating subject. It involves many curious complications aside from those arising from superstition and the conventionalities.

"There is the matter of life insurance, for instance. In case euthanasia were permissible under the law and all the ground were cleared for relieving the sufferer from his needless misery by a painless death—what, then, would the insurance company with a risk on his life have to say? These and many other curious speculations suggest themselves in considering the subject.

"I am still receiving great numbers of communications since the newspapers gave publicity to what was said before the State Medical Association. They come from physicians, clergymen and laymen and some of them relate striking instances in support of the euthanasia suggestion.

"And then, I learn I am getting fame of another sort. A few days ago an acquaintance was seeking a house to rent. The woman who had charge of premises, to which he was favorably inclined, he referred to me as a reference.

"The woman threw up her hands in horror.

"'What!' she cried, 'that man who believes in killing everybody who is sick?'

"I had no idea of a public discussion when I advanced the euthanasia proposition. It was to a medical society that I spoke and not to the public at large. I have no intention of continuing the discussion, though I am more profoundly convinced than ever that what I advocated is warranted by humanity and the cold logic of existing facts.

"It is an interesting and an important subject, and it is well enough to give people a jolt now and then to set them thinking on such subjects as may be a little out of the ordinary rut."

BREEDING GIANTS.

French Experiment That Recalls the Project of Frederick the Great.

From the Philadelphia Press.

Among the various remedies to arrest the decay of France it is proposed to offer prizes for large families, the remission of taxes to people who have a number of sons, the extra taxation of childless families and bachelors; and one interesting plan is to make bachelors ineligible for official positions under the Government and the municipalities. Another ingenious gentleman suggests that married men and fathers of children be exempt from military service and that the French Army be limited to bachelors only.

Other inducements have been proposed, and it is rather apropos that just at this time, when so much interest is being excited in this subject, one of the professors of the University of Chicago should be fortunate enough to discover the food of which giants are made. This discovery has been recently published in France and attracted much attention.

Some time ago Count Alfred de Pierrecourt left a legacy of $2,000,000 to his native city of Rouen to pay the expense of experiments for the propagation of giants. His heirs raised a row about it and appealed successfully to the courts, which have recently given them three-fourths of the estate and retained one-fourth of it as ample to carry out the ideas of the deceased.

Under the supervision of the municipality an institution for raising giants is to be established with the income of $50,000. The trustees are to search the world for men and women of large stature and are to pair them off in couples and place them in the homes upon a farm near Rouen. It would be a good idea to feed them on the stuff which the Chicago professor has been wasting on white rats. If he can double the size of a white rat he ought to do wonders with a lot of Frenchmen.

Sam Houston's Indian Wife.

From the Fort Gibson Post.

A movement is on foot to remove the remains of the Cherokee wife of Gen. Sam Houston to Fort Gibson, to rest in the national cemetery here. She was married to Sam Houston at Fort Gibson, where her people resided, not long after his arrival from Tennessee, where he resigned the office of Governor of that State, which movement is shrouded in mystery so far as history is concerned. Miss Rogers is said to have been very beautiful, and that Houston knew her in Tennessee before her removal here. Chief-elect Rogers of the Cherokee nation is one of her nearest relatives. Mrs. Heffernan, landlady of the Trent House, is also a relative. Both have consented to the removal of the remains, which now lie at Wilson's Rock, on the Arkansas River, about twelve miles from Muldrow. A suitable monument will be placed above the grave in the national cemetery at Fort Gibson.